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## Обґрунтування теорії японських медіа у дискурсі соціальних комунікацій

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Обґрунтовується теорія японських медіа. У роботі проаналізовано соціальні особливості японських ЗМІ у системному взаємозв'язку із певними теоріями соціальних комунікацій. Досліджується, як соціальні передумови співвідносяться з різними типами японських ЗМІ, такими як газети, телебачення, Інтернет, індустрія аніме та манги тощо. У статті аналізується явище прес-клубів, журналістики оживлення у місцевих газетах та принцип співіснування в японських ЗМІ. Також робота включає пристосування теорії використання та задоволення до індустрії медійних розваг. Дослідження показує, що теорія японських медіа тісно пов'язана з історичними та соціальними передумовами. Наукова робота пропонує системний аналіз медіа-теорій, що можуть бути пристосовані до японської медіа-системи, які обґрунтовані актуальними тенденціями японського ринку та соціальними передумовами. Автор статті також досліджує такі теорії медіа, як теорію нав'язування повістки дня, теорію культивування і теорію глобального села. Кожна з цих теорій має свої власні соціальні особливості в Японії, що відрізняються в залежності від типів медіа. Наприклад, теорія нав'язування повістки дня може бути пристосована до щоденних національних газет Японії, але інші засоби медіа її, як правило, не використовують. Проте теорія використання та задоволення може бути пристосована не лише до розважальних медіа, а і до японських журналів. Результати роботи можуть бути використані для подальших досліджень японської теорії медіа у вітчизняному та іноземному наукових дискурсах.

**Ключові слова:** японські ЗМІ; соціальні комунікації; прес-клуби; журналістика оживлення; принцип співіснування медіа; індустрія аніме та манги; теорія використання та задоволення.

### 1. Introduction

**Problem statement.** In Japan mass media are closely connected with the social communications. The theory of the local media represents that not only the means of public opinion form their audience, but even the ordinary Japanese people, reading the newspapers or watching TV, can influence the development of means of the mass media they are related to. Japanese news agencies and broad international newspaper home delivery services prove that the social preconditions directly affected their establishment. Hayashi Kaori, the full professor of Tokyo University, states that "In Japan, personal and community relationships are the key factors that determine subscriber loyalty [1]".

**Latest research works and publications analysis.** During the research, we analyzed the works by the following

scholars: Hayashi Kaori (mass media theory, newspaper and magazine market analysis), Richard Harris (cognitive social psychology in mass media theories), Anthony Rausch (mass media theory, local Japanese newspapers), Marina Pomelova (Japanese media institute analysis in political discourse) and Manu Gupta (analysis of media theories).

**Purpose of the paper.** The scientific paper aims to show how the social communications rationalize Japanese media and which theories can be applied to the different means of Japanese organs of public opinion. The research distinguishes the unique social peculiarities in Japanese media.

**Research object.** Japanese media theory.

**Research methods.** Japanese media theory at the present stage combines the following elements: the social preconditions, that developed the contemporary Japanese media landscape, which converged traditional methods of social interactions and modern technological platforms in

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media. The modern means of media are the second important part of Japanese media theory, such as digital media and cross-media systems. They provide the broadest informational network in the world to the readership, proving that Japan is truly the informational society. The highest level of Internet penetration in Japan (approximately 91,1 %) justifies that digital media are one of the leading means there. The third element is represented by the mass communication theories, that form the substructure that media theory is based on. There are multiple theories by different researchers, who describe the principles and peculiarities of media generally and particularly.

During our research, we analyzed the phenomenon of Japanese media theory and put it together with the different communication theories presented by James Dearing and Everett Rogers (agenda setting theory), Denis McQuail (media responsibility theory), George Gebner (cultivation theory), Blumler, Elihu Katz, Philip Palmgreen, Sven Windahl (uses and gratifications theory) and Marshall McLuhan (global village theory). We also implemented the research with theoretical works of Hayashi Kaori and Anthony Rausch, who scrutinized the discourse of Japanese media theory (Japanese national and local newspapers, digital media) and Richard Harris, who categorized communication theories (from cognitive social psychology aspects). Eventually, we presented the examples from modern Japanese media, which depict the theories mentioned above. Our research showed how Japanese media theory functions at the present stage.

During the research, we used the following methods: systematic analysis (a way of putting together the pieces of information to create an understanding of the whole of what is happening in our society), describing method (describes the characteristics of the phenomenon that is being studied), and structural analysis (an approach to human activity that sees it as analyzable in terms of networks of relationships; objects derive meaning from their positions in these relationships, which attempts to equalize by reducing them to the same underlying universal system).

## 2. Results

Each part of Japanese media system deals with the social communications in that way or another. Japanese newspapers represent the power of the local media industry to the rest of the world. International dailies in Japan provide the highest circulations in the world (up to 9 million copies per day) [2, p. 28], and none of the similar editions overseas can compete with them. Five pillars of so-called “newspaper pyramid” in Japan, owned by wealthy family households and corporations, are represented by Yomiuri, Asahi, Mainichi, Nikkei and Sankei Shimbun [3, p. 22–23]. Despite the high-class level of the news coverage in these newspapers, they do not act like rivals when it comes to publishing scoops or information about politics and economics. Most of Japanese newspapers are the members of so-called press clubs, – organizations which gather information of current importance to share it only between subscribed patrons. Nowadays there are more than 1000 press clubs around

Japan. They control the process of interviewing all important government officials. For instance, all journalists can ask premier-minister only those questions which their press club prepared before the interview [4, p. 773–774]. This phenomenon can be considered as a demonstration of agenda setting theory, developed by James Dearing and Everett Rogers. They define it as “the ability of the mass media to structure audience cognitions and to effect change among existing cognitions». In addition, it implies that “...the media do not necessarily tell us what to think, but rather what to think about” [9, p. 35]. Marina Pomelova highlights that “Such system leads to the circumstance that in almost each media Japanese reader, listener or spectator find the standardized information, received by correspondents from the same sources [4, p. 774]”. Moreover, she stresses that in such conditions Japanese publishers and broadcasters focus on efficiency and speed of news coverage, and importance of the thematic content decreases, while in the Western media discourse such a situation is rather opposite. According to this fact, we can consider it as the direct consequence of Japanese media theory social and historical preconditions. Japanese regional and local press or prefectural newspapers are represented by Chihochi Shimbun and other editions and communicate with the local society in their own special way. Full professor of Tokyo University Anthony Rausch in his research distinguishes such interaction as the new genre of journalism, which he calls “revitalization journalism” [5, p. 1]. In this discourse, the publications in the local newspapers contain “local identity-affirmation, local boosterism and direct local business promotion», and they «are being presented as ‘news’ content within long-running columns in a local newspaper in rural Japan» [5, p. 1]. Such coexistence helps the rural regions of Japan as whole, because it develops the local business, increases the money incomes and are welcomed by the readers, who are interested in prosperity of their homelands. This example is one of the most sufficient points which prove that Japanese media theory is centered around the social communications. While western readers find advertisement in the media rather annoying, Japanese people use it to fulfill the interests of both sides, in addition helping their local economy. The popular theory in mass communications, called media responsibility theory, is proposed by many different researchers. One of them, Denis McQuail, emphasizes that “Media should accept and fulfill certain obligations to society” [6; 7, p. 171]. Japanese local rural newspapers justify that this concept can work in both directions. Not only media, but their audience should accept certain obligations as well, whether it is necessary for the whole community. We suggest calling that a media coexistence principle. Such principle can be also implemented for Japanese television and radio industry, such as state corporation NHK, which gather voluntary monthly fee for using its services from its audience [8, p. 11]. Despite being not obligatory, Japanese people tend to pay it regularly. While broadcasters do their best to produce the content for their audience, spectators feel the social responsibility to pay for that even if they do not have to. Such coexistence is hard to imagine in other countries. Cultivation

theory, proposed by George Gebner, presents that “viewers learn facts about the real world from observing the world of television”, and “homogenization of people’s divergent perceptions of social reality into a convergent mainstream” [9, p. 52]. It can be applied to Japanese educational shows and creating another reality in Japanese manga and anime. Manga and anime represent another important part of Japanese media industry [3, p. 24]. Being published in press either broadcasted on TV and internet, they cover the large audience and are appreciated by many people around the world. Anime and manga exploit the concept of hypertextuality [10, p. 2], when one work refers to another. Lots of references between the shows and comics are the one of the reasons why this industry gathered such an immense and diverse community of fans. Another important principle anime and manga are based on is franchising. Long-running franchises such as Love Live and The Idol M@ster are presented in printed media (comics in different magazines, light novels), television (anime), videogames, music, merchandise (plastic figures, clothes, accessories etc.), Internet and in the live concerts [11, p. 145–146]. On top of that, anime and manga industry applies to the social communications, specifically to uses and gratifications theory. This theory was firstly proposed in the 1980s by Jay Blumler, Elihu Katz, Philip Palmgreen, Sven Windahl and other researchers [9, p. 32]. It defines how people choose content, channels and means of the media to fulfill their own needs. Richard Harris points out that every person can differently perceive the same piece of media content such as an article in a certain newspaper or a movie on TV: “...the experience of watching a horror film will be very different for someone who is experiencing much empathy with the victim than for someone who is being superficially entertained by the suspense of the plot” [9, p. 32]. Moreover, this theory also implies that in the world of different choices every person is free to consume a content they like in the media [12, p. 367]. Anime and manga industry proposes lots of pieces of works in some very diverse genres for different ages, from kids to elders, from those who prefer peaceful stories to those who like violence. Uses and gratifications theory can be used to analyze the psychological motives of Japanese media audience who chose different types of content depending on their social determination. The Internet in Japan represents the highest level of penetration in the world (91,1 %). Many users have more than one device to access the network. Japanese people constantly use social networks and messengers (Twitter and Line), digital versions

of leading newspapers also become very popular. Video hosting sites like NicoNico or YouTube have many users as well [13, p. 16–17]. The phenomenon of virtual videoblogger has become very popular in Japan recently. People voice fictional characters and make videoblogs on their behalf without revealing their identity. Up to now, the most popular Japanese virtual youtuber Kizuna Ai reached 2 million subscribers [14]. In addition, video streaming with live chat also unites people from distant places on one site, so no doubt that nowadays Japanese Internet represents Marshall McLuhan’s global village theory, where all the people communicate each other no matter how far the distance is between them [15].

### 3. Discussion

During the research, we highlight certain elements of Japanese media theory such as international and local newspapers in Japan, broadcasting, anime and manga industry, Japanese magazines, the Internet and applied to them certain theories of the social communications. Based on that, we distinguish the peculiarities of Japanese media theory which exist only within its discourse. Each part of Japanese media system deals with the social communications in that way or another. The structure of Japanese media implicates that each mean of communications has its own peculiarities we must scrutinize before proceeding to the further explorations of Japanese media system. The complex analysis of Japanese media theory is performed for the first time. The data of the research present the information of current importance. The results of the research can be used for the further study of Japanese media.

### 4. Conclusions

Japanese mass media theory has its own authentic peculiarities, which are determined by the way Japanese society functions. While press clubs strictly control the political media discourse, Japanese readers and TV spectators are very loyal to the local media. Social conditions justified Japanese media relations as coexistent. This situation has a striking resemblance to Japanese culture, where traditions coexist with the new technologies and Western trends, and Japanese media with their audience act the same way. Specifically, the following peculiarities can be applied to the different means of Japanese media in social communications’ discourse:

Means of media	Social peculiarity	Communication theory
International newspapers	Press club system	Agenda setting theory
Local newspapers	Revitalization genre	Media responsibility theory and coexistence principle, cultivation theory
Broadcasting (TV and radio)	Services fee is not obligatory but people pay it	
Entertainment media (anime, manga, idol industry)	Franchising and diverse content for different ages	Uses and gratifications theory, cultivation theory
Magazines		
Internet	The highest level of penetration and uniting the communities	Global village theory

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## Пашченко Б. Г. Обоснование теории японских медиа в дискурсе социальных коммуникаций

Исследование посвящено обоснованию теории японских медиа. В работе исследованы социальные особенности японских СМИ, обусловленные определёнными теориями социальных коммуникаций. Полученные результаты указывают на то, как социальные предпосылки соотносятся с разными видами японских СМИ, такими как газеты, телевидение, Интернет, индустрия аниме и манги и так далее. В статье анализируется явление пресс-клубов, журналистики оживления в местных газетах и принцип сосуществования в японских СМИ. Также работа включает применение теории использования и удовлетворения к индустрии медийных развлечений. Исследование показывает, что теория японских медиа тесно связана с историческими и социальными предпосылками. Научная работа представляет системный анализ медиа-теорий, применимых к японской медиа-системе, обоснованных актуальными тенденциями японского рынка и социальными предпосылками. Автор статьи также исследует такие теории медиа, как теорию навязывания повестки дня, теорию культивирования и теорию глобальной деревни. Каждая из этих теорий имеет свои собственные социальные особенности в Японии, которые отличаются в зависимости от разных типов медиа. Например, теория навязывания повестки дня может быть применена к национальным ежедневным газетам Японии, но другие средства медиа, как правило, её не используют. Однако теория использования и удовлетворения может быть применена не только к развлекательным медиа, но и к японским журналам. Результаты работы могут быть использованы для последующих исследований японской теории медиа в отечественном и иностранном научных дискурсах.

**Ключевые слова:** японские СМИ; социальные коммуникации; пресс-клубы; журналистика оживления; принцип сосуществования медиа; индустрия аниме и манги; теория использования и удовлетворения.

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## **Pashchenko B. Rationale of Japanese media theory in the social communications` discourse**

The academic paper is devoted to the rationalization of Japanese media theory. This piece of work aims to show the social peculiarities of Japanese media, justified by certain theories of the social communications` discourse. The research reveals how social preconditions apply to the different means of media in Japan, such as newspapers, television, Internet, anime and manga industry etc. The author of this paper scrutinizes Japanese press clubs` phenomenon, revitalization in local newspapers and coexistence principle in Japanese media. Moreover, the paper highlights an implementation of uses and gratifications theory to Japanese media entertainment industry. The research justifies that media theory in Japan is based on the historical and social preconditions. The academic work presents a systematic analysis of media theories applied to Japanese media system, justified by Japanese market`s tendencies of current importance and social preconditions. The author of the paper also examines media theories such as agenda setting theory, cultivation theory and global village theory. Each of these theories have their own social peculiarities in Japan, and they differ depending on the different means of media. For example, agenda setting theory can be applied to Japanese national daily newspapers, but other means of media do not tend to use it. However, uses and gratifications theory can be applied not only to entertainment media, but to Japanese magazines as well. The results of the research can be used for the further research of Japanese media theory in domestic and foreign academic discourses.

**Keywords:** *Japanese media, social communications; press clubs; revitalization journalism; media coexistence principle; anime and manga industry; uses and gratifications theory.*



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